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ABSTRACT

Recent emphasis on stricter educational accountability measures has resulted in a profusion of educational and psychological tests available in today's market. This ERIC Digest has been prepared to meet educators' needs to find information about tests quickly and easily. Three resources discussed are the Test Collection database, the Mental Measurements Yearbook database, and the ERIC database. Three topics are examined: (1) finding tests and other measurement instruments; (2) finding test reviews; and (3) finding studies about a certain test. The Test Collection database can be searched online for tests, using test-related terms as descriptors or identifiers. The ERIC database can be searched online using publication type codes, using test-related terms as major descriptors, and by combining publication type code and specific test-related descriptors. The Mental Measurements Yearbook database can be searched using subject classifications. Test reviews are also available in ERIC, using the descriptor "Test Reviews," and in the Mental Measurements Yearbook and its monthly updates. A test can also be searched using its specific name. (LMO)

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ERIC DIGESTS

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT TESTS

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and Evaluation, Educational Testing Service,
Princeton, New Jersey

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT TESTS

Recent emphasis on testing and evaluation brought on by the push for stricter educational accountability measures has resulted in a profusion of educational and psychological tests available in today's market. Until recently, locating tests and information on tests was a tedious and complicated process. Today's educator has a need for quick and easy access to three types of information about tests: finding tests and other measurement instruments, finding test reviews, and finding studies about a certain test.

This digest has been prepared to meet that need by providing educators better access to assessment literature through the ETS Test Collection database (ETSF), the Mental Measurements Yearbook database (MMYD), and the ERIC database. Additional information on searchable databases related to testing can be found in the Directory of Information on Tests (1977).

FINDING TESTS AND OTHER MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

ETS Test Collection

The Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, maintains an extensive library of tests and other measurement devices which is now available as a publicly searchable database (currently containing over 7000 records) through the Bibliographic Retrieval Service (BRS), a commercial vendor of databases. The Test Collection provides current information on available published and unpublished tests and related activities, and maintains address files on American and foreign test publishers. The online database (label ETSF) uses ERIC descriptors and can be searched using the same search strategy used to access ERIC.

Use test-related terms as descriptors or identifiers. The subject terms used in the ETSF database are drawn from the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors. Additional subject indexing terms are available in the Identifier (ID) field. Besides searching by controlled vocabulary, keywords which appear anywhere in the record are also searchable. Linking of these terms with the appropriate Grade Level (GL) field and the Target Group (TG) field will provide the retrieval of information for that targeted population.

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center)

The ERIC database can be searched online (through DIALOG, BRS, or Systems Development Corporation, SDC), or through its printed indexes: Resources in Education and Current Index to Journals in Education. The database contains citations to over half a million journal articles and unpublished reports in the field of education.

Use the ERIC publication type code for tests and evaluation instruments. This simple online search strategy will retrieve all documents which have been assigned numeric code "160," the publication type code for tests, questionnaires, and other evaluation instruments. Documents retrieved through the use of this code will contain actual tests or test items.

Use test-related terms as major descriptors. When an ERIC document is indexed, it is assigned subject terms (descriptors) which can be designated as either "major" or "minor." (These subject terms are listed in the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors.) Specifying that test-related terms (for example, ACHIEVEMENT TESTS, APTITUDE TESTS, CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS) be major descriptors of a document will restrict the documents retrieved to those where specific types of tests were considered to be important subjects of the documents.

Use publication type code "160" with specific test-related descriptors. Crossing ("anding") publication type code "160", for example, with the descriptor AUDITORY TESTS will result in retrieval of documents which contain auditory tests or test items.

Buros Institute of Mental Measurements

The Buros Institute of Mental Measurements, now housed at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, publishes a variety of publications pertaining to information about the evaluation of educational and psychological tests. Two major publications, the Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook and Tests in Print III, consist of descriptive listings of tests. The Yearbook includes listings, references, and critical reviews of commercially published tests in English while Tests in Print III provides listings and references of commercially published tests that are in print

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and available for purchase or use (without reviews). The information contained in these reference works is also available in the Mental Measurements Yearbook database (MMYD) on BRS.

Use Buros' subject classifications to identify appropriate tests. Each test listed in the MMYD database, or the Buros' reference books, is classified by subject, e.g. READING. Terms used to describe the subtests (SCORES paragraph), or reviews of the tests in the database (TEXT paragraph) are also searchable.

FINDING TEST REVIEWS

ERIC

Use the ERIC descriptor TEST REVIEWS in your search. Crossing ("anding") the descriptor TEST REVIEWS (designated as a major descriptor) with the name of the test in which you are interested will result in retrieval of documents which contain actual reviews of that test.

Buros Institute of Mental Measurements

Consult the Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook, edited by Oscar K. Buros. The Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook contains 898 original reviews and excerpts from 140 test reviews originally published in journals. To find a review of a particular test, readers can use the Index of Test Titles which is located at the end of Volume II of the Yearbook. The reader need only match the number immediately following the test title to the entry number which appears on the top outside margin of each page in the "Tests and Reviews" section of the Yearbook.

Search the MMYD database. Online searching of the Mental Measurements Yearbook database can retrieve citations not only from the Eighth Yearbook but also from regular monthly updates to the database. The online availability of test reviews sets MMYD apart from any other database which provides test information. Published test reviews covered by the Eighth Yearbook are searchable under the Text (TX) field, and those published since the Eighth Yearbook are searchable under a separate Review (RR) field.

FINDING STUDIES ABOUT A CERTAIN TEST

ERIC

Use the name of the test as an identifier when searching ERIC online. In addition to descriptors, documents in the ERIC database can also be assigned "identifiers." Identifiers are usually (but not always) proper names and, like descriptors, can be designated as major or minor. Their purpose is to provide the indexer and searcher with flexibility and precision in describing the contents of a document. A search of a test name as an identifier will result in retrieval of documents where a specific test was considered the major or minor subject of the documents.

Buros Institute of Mental Measurements

Consult the Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook and Tests in Print III. The Yearbook and Tests in Print III also contain references on the construction, validity, use, and limitations of tests. These references are listed immediately after the test entry in both sources.

In the Yearbook, the procedure for finding these references is the same as that given earlier under "Finding Test Reviews". In Tests in Print III, the alphabetical arrangement of test titles make the research studies easy to find.

Searching the MMYD database. The already mentioned MMYD (Mental Measurements Yearbook database) is also an excellent source for published research on specific tests. Regular monthly updates make the file current and an excellent source for research studies on tests.

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RESOURCES

ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation
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ETS Test Collection
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